

# Russian strategy has shifted

Monday 21 February 2022, by [BOJCUN Marko](#) (Date first published: 19 February 2022).

**Russian strategy has shifted markedly in the last few days. Putin and Lavrov refuse to agree a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) to look at repeated ceasefire violations of increasing intensity from the side of DNR and LNR. Russia will only restart any Minsk accords negotiations if Ukraine accepts its interpretation of the order of their implementation. Continued Ukrainian rejection of that interpretation leads Moscow to switch to a new strategy of provoking a fresh armed engagement along the front line too justify a sizable Russian drive into Donbas or along the Sea of Azov or near Transdnistria.**

Thus the mass evacuation of residents to Russia and a mobilisation of reservists ordered by Donetsk Peoples Republic and the Luhansk Peoples Republic leaders as well as the all-out media blitz to smear the Ukrainians as the provokers of war.

The Russian State Duma's resolution on 15 February asking Putin to recognise the state independence of the separatist statelets makes sense now as part of a new end game. Russia abandons Minsk, gives up hope in using the statelets as levers inside Ukraine and will use them more decisively to escalate war against it. Discussions between Russia and the USA on wider issues of disarmament in Europe will be decoupled from the issue of Ukraine's future as Russia will insist that it is its own prerogative to decide, not for the USA. Germany and France might be more willing to co-operate if the USA is pushed out the door.

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